

Communication Strategies in Rural Tourism Routes in the State of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil: Tools for Capturing Tourists

Marcelo Pellegrini, Morgana Secchi, Ana Claudia Machado Padilha, Amanda Regina Leite, Jaqueline Berdian de Oliveira, Geizi de Cássia Bettin do Amarante

Abstract— *Tourism is consolidating itself as one of the fastest growing economic activities in the world. Thus, it is necessary to use tools to publicize enterprises that are part of tourist routes. In this context, the objective of the study is to identify the dissemination practices implemented by the tourism route enterprises in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil. Through the marketing mix literature with emphasis on promotion. For this purpose, a qualitative research was carried out and the interview technique used, structured script with a priori determined categories that emerged from the literature review for six tourism routes in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil, accounting for 31 researched enterprises, where responses were recorded, recorded, tabulated and analyzed with the support of Microsoft® Excel™ software. As significant data from the study, it is considered that the use of communication tools in the dissemination of tourism routes in the state is presented as a strategy for promoting tourist destinations, since most of these tools are accessible and easily accessible to the public.*

Keywords— *Tourism Routes; Tourist Attraction, Disclosure; Tourist destinations.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Tourism is one of the fastest growing industries in the world, providing opportunities for economic growth and development in countries (Grigaliunaite, Pileiene & Bakanauskas, 2015). This emerging growth, allied to the transformations that occurred in society became popularized to the point of becoming one of the main drivers of the world economy (Wttc, 2016). The dynamism and the constant changes that occur in this market lead the tourist activity to a constant renewal.

Over the years and the growing adherence to tourism, new possibilities for services such as tourist routes have emerged. Routes usually consist of a mix of services, from food, lodging and leisure options. As a result, the way tourism is communicated to the market has also changed, thus introducing integrated marketing communication, which is the expansion of strategic organizational communication with the market, introducing, positioning and disseminating products, services, brand, benefits and solutions. Tanger search, with the holistic use of all elements of this compound, an efficient communication by the issuer with its target consumer (Santiago, 2002).

Disclosure has been taking place day by day whether it be through social networks, flyers, word of

mouth, radio or television (Hartley 2007). In a rapidly evolving globalized world, there are numerous implications and practices associated with social media, which are used by different groups from teens to seniors (Lenhart, Purcell, Smith & Zickuhr, 2010).

The innovations of the tourism market have brought new challenges for the sector, as tourists are increasingly informed and independent (Perinotto & Siqueira, 2016). Tourists have more choice, the range of services has grown, so competition is no longer just between companies in the same industry in a traditional way, now includes the consumer himself who, with access to information through digital platforms, for him to be loyal to a company, there must be a really advantageous differential because otherwise he feels able to offer himself the services that companies do not get (Perinotto & Siqueira, 2016).

Social media is not only used for online entertainment or shopping, but there are many possible utilities, as evidenced by different everyday practices (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). In addition to shopping, social media is used especially in tourism to search for information (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). Different tourist audiences use social media to search and select locations, thus the role of media in

tourism, considered a crucial tool for its growth and development (Gilbert, Karahalios & Sandvig, 2008).

Transforming the type of tourists requires creative and innovative methods, as organizations must always be one step ahead in order to create new possibilities and remain in line with market competitiveness. The advantages of digital marketing are diverse, and for the tourism industry that uses new trends in order to get closer to tourists through positioning, branding and business growth (Perinotto & Siqueira, 2016).

Tourism routes are presented as an element of development of the regional economy, contributing to the relationship between small properties and the appreciation of the local population (Lunardi & Almeida, 2008). Thus, the development of tourism contributes to the dissemination of the municipality, highlighting the culture of the region, as well as caring for the environment (Pellegrini, Secchi, Padilha, Amarante & Perreira, 2019). Given this, the objective of the research is to identify the communication strategies implemented in the enterprises that integrate tourism routes in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil.

The municipalities and enterprises surveyed are: Erechim with the "Rota Vale das Cantinas e dos Parreirais", "Rota Morro do Vicini" and the "Rota das Agroindústrias". In the municipality of Marau, the "Salamarias" route. The municipality of Garibaldi located in the northwest of the state the route was the "Via Orgânica" created in 2016, a pioneer in Brazil for exploiting the production, industrialization, marketing and consumption of certified organic foods as attractive. Finally, in the municipality of Três Cachoeiras the route went to "Vale do Paraíso".

The importance of the promotion strategies that tourism provides to the rural environment (Fávero, 2000), justifies this research. The tourist routes contribute to the revitalization of "dormant" regions and the settlement of man in the countryside, consequently, with the reduction of rural exodus, enhancement and rescue of local culture. It results in the improvement of the living conditions of the local population, job creation, valorization of local products and closer relations established between the countryside and the city, through the exchange of information and experiences between them (Fávero, 2000).

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Marketing

Since the 1960s, there have been advances in the field of marketing, so over time the term marketing has been dealt with more thoroughly (Carasila & Milton,

2008). Thus comes the first definition of marketing by the American Marketing Association (AMA), which defines the term as conducting business activities that drive the flow of goods and services from producer to consumer or user (Carasila & Milton, 2008). Thus, one of the definitions that most impacted over time was presented by Jerome McCarthy, with the goal of satisfying consumers and helping to achieve business goals (Carasila & Milton, 2008; Traynor, 2015).

A few years later, a new definition of marketing was developed by the University of Ohio, the process by which a company anticipates, postpones, or satisfies the structure of demand for economic goods and services through the physical development, promotion, exchange, and distribution of goods and services (Carasila & Milton, 2008). The concept of marketing that is still widely used was developed in the 1990s, a set of institutions and processes to create, communicate, deliver and exchange offers that have value to consumers, customers, partners and society in general (Carasila & Milton, 2008).

Marketing is also presented as the process that facilitates the exchange of values between a buyer and a seller, in which the former seeks to satisfy their needs and wants and the latter to their organizational goals (Pinheiro & Gulo, 2005). The essence of modern marketing thinking is to deliver customer value and satisfaction. Good marketing is indispensable to the success of any company. The two main marketing goals are to attract new customers, promising them superior value, and to preserve current customers by offering them satisfaction (Kotler & Armstrong, 2007).

2.2 Mix de Marketing

The term "marketing mix" was first coined by Borden in 1964 and involved twelve elements, but was later simplified by McCarthy into the famous "4 Ps" where it deals with a set of points of interest for organizations to be aware of want to pursue their marketing goals. This model is based on the idea that the organization produces a good or service (product), where the consumer should be informed that this good or service exists (promotion), and it should be distributed to various types and places of sale (plaza), and finally the company must charge an amount for the supply of the product which is called (price) (Carasila & Milton, 2008; Traynor, 2015).

Marketing Mix encompasses organizational decisions that include identifying product launch opportunities as well as tailoring them to customer needs (Traynor, 2015). In this sense, pricing decisions aim to generate competitive advantage and return for companies. Promotion decisions are related to investments in

communication and sales promotion strategies, and square or distribution decisions involve choosing sales channels that meet customer needs (Traynor, 2015). Figure 1

presents the four variables that form the so-called marketing composite, through the concepts presented by Kotler and Keller (2006).



Fig.1: The 4 Ps of the Marketing Mix.

Source: Prepared from Kotler and Keller (2006).

It is noticed that the 4 Ps involve the whole communication process for the launch of a product (Figure 1), as well as the characteristics of the product, the price that will be offered to the consumer market, the ways of disclosure and the means where it will be disclosed.

According to Pinheiro&Gullo (2005), the product is linked to the idea of its value and its degree of quality, in order to satisfy the needs and desires of consumers, their attributes, their benefits and design and consumption ratio, all these elements can be expressed by brand and packaging. For the authors Odgen and Crescitelli (2008), the price is present among the decisions in the marketing mix, each price choice must be in accordance with the others. For the author Cobra (1997), the promotional compound of the product or service comprises advertising, public relations, sales promotion, personal selling and product merchandising. The distribution channels (plaza) are employed to take the manufacturer's product to the final consumer, or rather to walk the path that is between the producer and the final consumer (Odgen&Crescitelli, 2008).

2.3 Promotion

The American Marketing Association- AMA (2019) defines promotional marketing that includes tactics that encourage short-term buying, influence buying and quantity as well as being measurable in volume, share and profit. According to the American of National Advertisers - ANA (2019) some examples include coupons,

sweepstakes, discounts, prizes, special packaging, cause marketing and licensing.

Las Casas (2006) defines promotion as a controllable variable of the marketing mix that receives the meaning of communication. For Kotler (1998), promotion is the set of actions that will be focusing on a certain product or service, in order to stimulate its commercialization and its dissemination. Companies also need to communicate with customers, and this communication must be a combination of a consistent marketing program, where the composition of communication tools can be defined as the main promotion tools such as advertising, sales promotion, public relations or advertising, sales force and direct marketing (Kotler& Armstrong, 2007).

Public relations are other components of communication, which involve developing good relationships with the company's various audiences by gaining favorable publicity, building a good corporate image, and managing unfavorable rumors, stories or events (Kotler& Armstrong, 2007). Direct marketing occurs as an interactive system that uses one or more advertising media to get a plausible response in any location benefiting consumers in many ways (Kotler, 1998), as a strategy for communicating products or services directly to customers, without intermediaries (Dias &Cassar, 2005).

2.3.1 Advertising

It is defined as any persuasive advertisement or communication in the mass media during a given period and in a given space paid or donated by an individual, company or organization (Churchill & Peter, 2000). It may also be an paid form of non-personal presentation of ideas, products or services by an identified sponsor (Las Casas, 2006).

Advertising on radio, TV, magazines and newspapers aims to guide consumers through the five levels of communication: ignorance, knowledge, understanding, conviction and action (Sant'Anna, 2005). The cycle begins at the lowest level where the object is unknown and passes through the others, until it reaches the final level that is where the consumer takes action (Sant'Anna, 2005). A typical example is based on a new tourism venture, where advertising serves as a link between this new venture and the customer, with the purpose of informing him initially, and finally convincing him to visit him (Sant'Anna, 2005).

Therefore, the media planner needs to know the ability of major media types to achieve coverage, frequency and impact (Kotler & Keller, 2006). These professionals choose among the various media categories, studying their advantages and disadvantages, considering the audience's media habits, product characteristics, message characteristics and cost as variables (Kotler & Keller, 2006).

Thus, the media strategy seeks to ensure the transmission that will bring the best proportionality between investment and the efficiency with which consumers will be reached, bringing a higher return according to the objective of the advertising campaign (Sant'Anna, 2005). Not only that, there are some factors that affect media choice, such as ad objectives, audience coverage, message requirements, timing and location of the purchase decision, and media cost (Etzer, Walker & Stanton, 2001).

2.3.2 Word-of-mouth

There are also other tourist outreach tools in addition to social media, such as word-of-mouth, where individuals enjoy their travel experiences not only looking for news, but also knowing and communicating with others, other travelers (Wang, 1999). Thus, interactions with other tourists play an important role in the process of shaping the travel experience and indicating places to visit (Wang, 1999).

Customer service experiences can be significantly influenced by the actions and behaviors of other customers (Jung, Yoo and Arnold, 2017). Studies argue that the

presence of other customers enjoying services together with others can alter service experiences since word-of-mouth brings expectations (Thakor, Suri, & Saleh, 2008). Thus, customer-customer interaction became an emerging topic within service marketing during the first decade of the XXI century (Nicholls, 2010). Thus, the interaction between acquaintances is important, since they indicate places to be visited for friends, thus contributing to the dissemination of places to be visited (Gorman, 1979; Murphy, 2001).

2.3.3 Internet

The Internet is among the media as the tool with the largest adherence to consumers and provides integration of companies making the various tourist services easily accessible (Beni, 2003). In this sense, the internet establishes itself as a fundamental tool for tourism enterprises, thus achieving a rapid expansion of information services such as commercial applications, promotion, dissemination and e-commerce (Cruz, Mota & Perinotto, 2012). In addition, the internet allows actions that were impossible through traditional marketing methods, such as mass customization that makes each consumer feel special and convey this positive perception to the company's brand (Vaz, 2008).

The development of Information and Communication Technologies, coupled with the popularization of the Internet, has expanded to reach industries (Vaz, 2008). Thus, it ends up requiring equipment modernization, communication virtualization and product customization (Vaz, 2008). The consumer increasingly becomes a content producer and demands open communication with the company, which in turn, through the internet has the possibility to talk directly with him, without the need for intermediaries (Vaz, 2008).

As modernization and digitization transform the tourism sector, there is a promotion of hitherto non-existent benefits for entrepreneurs, and tourists are also affected by these changes (Sánchez, 2015). In addition, the main benefits of searching for information on the Internet are related to the time savings, convenience and variety of products available anytime and anywhere (Melo, 2013).

On the one hand, companies have access to tools that bring them closer to the consumer, gaining their trust and being able to easily measure the scope of their marketing efforts (Arruda & Pimenta, 2005). On the other hand, the consumer becomes independent and can make comparisons and surveys among competitors more easily, requiring companies innovative strategies to achieve customer loyalty (Arruda & Pimenta, 2005).

III. METHOD

Considering that the objective of the study is to identify the dissemination practices implemented by the tourism route enterprises in the state of Rio Grande do Sul,

Brazil. Data were extracted from secondary sources detailed in Table 1. Where 6 routes were studied accounting for 31 tourist enterprises in the state.

Table 1. Research Data

Searched Route	County	Data collection period	Researcher(s)
Salamarias	Marau	June and August/2016	Faoro, Daiane
Via Orgânica	Garibaldi	January/2018	Padilha, Ana Claudia Machado
Vale Do Paraíso	Três Cachoeiras	November/2018	Padilha, Ana Claudia Machado
Vale Das Cantinas e dos Parreirais	Erechim	December/2018	Berdian, Jaqueline de Oliveira; Leite, Amanda Regina
Morro Do Vicini	Erechim	December/2018	Berdian, Jaqueline de Oliveira; Leite, Amanda Regina
Agroindústrias	Erechim	December/2018	Berdian, Jaqueline de Oliveira; Leite, Amanda Regina

A methodological choice, we adopted the qualitative approach of multiple case study (Yin, 1989). The technique used by the researchers was the interview, with the application of a questionnaire, through a priori determined categories that emerged from the literature review tools for the dissemination of tourist enterprises. It was integrated by an open question, and the answers were recorded in audio, recorded, tabulated in Excel software and analyzed. Finally, the data analysis technique selected was the content analysis of the interviewees suggested by Bardin (1997), considering the following steps in this type of analysis: pre-analysis, material exploration and treatment of results and interpretations.

IV. RESULTS

The projects surveyed in the “Rota das Salamarias” (Marau) four projects are located in rural areas and one in urban areas. On the “Via Orgânica” (Garibaldi) route, five are located in rural areas and three in urban areas. In the “Vale das Cantinas e dos Parreirais” (Erechim) route, all the projects are located in rural areas, as well as the other routes of the “Morro do Vicini” and “Rota das Agroindústrias” municipalities. On the “Vale do Paraíso” route (TrêsCachoeiras), all the projects are located in rural areas within the municipality.

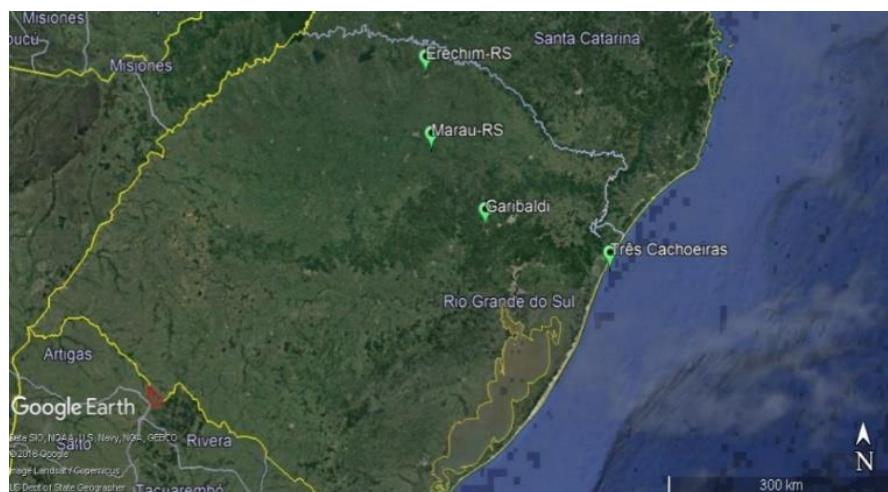


Fig.2: Map of municipalities with the surveyed routes.

Source: Google Earth (2019).

It is possible to verify that the oldest enterprises that started tourism in the twentieth century (Table 2), were the Via Orgânica route located in the municipality of

Garibaldi. This is due to the fact that the city of Garibaldi is recognized for its vocation of offering tourism products that are recognized for the economic benefits they offer as

well as the self-esteem and socio-cultural development of the traditionally family-oriented regions (Padilha, Matos

de Sá & Rodrigues, 2018).

Table 2. Characterization of Enterprises

Route	Entreprise	Attractives	Beginning of tourism
Salamarias	Cantina Bordignon	Wine and Juice Tasting	2008
	Casa Camera Ristorante	Restaurant with typical Italian colonial food.	2009
	Cantina da Terra	Restaurant with typical Italian colonial food. Sale of products manufactured on the Salamarias Route.	2006
	Maculam	Wine and Juice Tasting and visit the grape vineyard.	2009
	Ervateira Pagnussat	Sampling of yerba mate production.	2008
	Pol Cachaçaria	Colonial Coffee and Handmade Alembic.	2009
Via Orgânica	Cooperativa Vinícola Garibaldi	Wine and Juice	1931
	Sítio Crescer	Vegetables and fruits	2009
	Econatura	Juices, Vinegars & Flours	1996
	Sabor Ecológico	Organic food	2009
	Família Mariane	Cereals, legumes and vegetables	1998
	Família Boroto	Wine, fruits and cereals	1998
	Restaurante Valle Rustico	Vegetables, Fruits and Meals	2009
	Fit UP	Juices	2016
Vale Das Cantinas e dos Parreirais	Embutidos Bandiera	Visit to sausage agro-industry and product tasting	2016
	Cantina Bandiera	Tasting and selling cheese, salami and wine	2008
	Choperia Ágape	Tasting, brewing courses, guided tours, meal, happy hour and events Canteen and Grapevines	2012
	Cantina Batistella	Canteen and Grapevines	2004
	La Cantina Slongo	Juice and wine making process and the restaurant. The property also works with events.	2010
Morro do Vicini	Ficks Sabores do Campo	Sale of products made in the agribusiness of the property such as fig, mandarin, pumpkin, blueberry, pickled jams and brown sugar.	2002
	Vinícola Bianchi	Wine tasting and vineyard tour	2013
	Morro do Vicini	Family history, vineyards for tasting, visit to grandparents and family objects.	2002
	Granjinha do Thiso	Visit to the property, vineyard tasting and wine tasting.	2000
	Villa Trentin	Gastronomy, restaurant and colonial cafe, events inns (the whole project is made of reused material).	2015
Agro-industrias	Café Colonial Andreolla	Gastronomy, property tour and agribusiness.	2003
Val e	Alambique Terceiro Gole	Visit to the still, history of the Sugarcane liquor production by the family.	1997

	Casa do Filó	Waterfall, waterfall, restored old house, historical staging, dances at the end a typical Italian dinner, preservation of ancient artifacts and monjolo.	2006
	Moinho de Pedra	Visit of the stone mill.	2006
	Sítio Dona Cenira	Memorial history, natural beauty, waterfalls, colonial coffee, lodging, trail and sale of jams and liqueurs.	2006
	Sítio Dona Lucia	Trails, colonial coffee, jams, liqueurs, artisanal sugarcane liquor.	2005
	Pousada Casa da Tia Laura	Religious trail, lodging houses, cabins, rural cafe, lunch, dinner, landscape, historic house from the year 1904.	2004

It is noted that most enterprises and other routes started their tourism activities in the first decade of the XXI century, which confirms what theorists Dias and Cassar (2005) mention that tourism in the early years of the century has been consolidating itself as an important economic activity of the world. Some researched enterprises have in their environment the production of grapes and the manufacture of wines, juices, liqueurs and sugarcane liquor that are marketed during the visit on the properties. It is noticed that the tourist practices near the

wine regions are responsible for a considerable increase in wine sales, helping the product dissemination and making the producers redouble efforts in search of quality and variety (Lavandoski, Tonini&Barreto, 2012).

It is observed that the researched enterprises use various dissemination tools (Table 3), since advertising becomes a link between this new venture and the customer, with the purpose of informing it initially, and finally convincing it to visit him.

Table 3. Disclosure of the projects

Route	Enterprise	Project disclosure way
Salamarias	Cantina Bordignon	National Salami Festival, word-of-mouth
	Casa CameraRistorante	National Salami Festival, Facebook, newspapers, site
	Cantina da Terra	National Salami Festival, Facebook
	Maculam	National Salami Festival, newspapers, site
	Ervateira Pagnussat	word-of-mouth, Facebook
	Pol Cachaçaria	word-of-mouth
Via Orgânica	Cooperativa Vinícola Garibaldi	Site, Facebook, Whatsapp, Instagram
	Sítio Crescer	AirBNB, Facebook, Booking, Site
	Econatura	Facebook
	Sabor Ecológico	Facebook, Instagram, Radio
	Família Mariane	Word of mouth, fairs, referral, website, city hall campaigns, Facebook, Instagram, Whatsapp
	Família Boroto	Television reports and newspapers, and city hall that publishes Via Orgânica. Organic shops, restaurants, inns. Participation in trade shows in São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Brasília, events like Vintage in Garibaldi and Fenachamp.
	Restaurante Valle Rustico	Facebook
Vale das Cantinas e dos	Fit UP	Instagram, Facebook, Blog, tastings
	Embutidos Bandiera	Radio and believes that the visitations (word of mouth) leverages the disclosure of the property.
	Cantina Bandiera	Folders at community fairs and parties
	Choperia Ágape	Radio, Facebook, word of mouth and at events
	Cantina Batistella	Facebook

	La Cantina Slongo	TV, wordofmouth
Morro do vicini	Ficks Sabores do Campo	Divulgation in the Di Bacco party, with brochures and leaflets
	Vinícola Bianchi	Divulgation in the Di Bacco party, with brochures and leaflets
	Morro do Vicini	Divulgation in the Di Bacco party, with brochures and leaflets
	Granjinha do Thiso	Divulgation in the Di Bacco party, with brochures and leaflets
	Villa Trentin	Site, Facebook
Agroindús-trias	Café Colonial Andreolla	word of mouth, Facebook
Vale do paráiso	Alambique Terceiro Gole	word of mouth
	Casa do Filó	Folders, word of mouth
	Moinho de Pedra	Facebook
	Sítio Dona Cenira	word of mouth, Facebook, Instagram
	Sítio Dona Lucia	word of mouth
	Pousada Casa da Tia Laura	word of mouth, Site, Facebook

It is noticed that among the media stand out the social networks like facebook, instagram and whatsapp, as well as the websites of the projects. This confirms that the internet establishes itself as a fundamental tool for tourism enterprises, thereby achieving rapid expansion of information services such as commercial applications, promotion, dissemination and e-commerce (Cruz, Mota & Perinotto, 2012).

Publicity at festivals and fairs in the region is also a tool for publicizing the projects, as a number of tourists visit these events in order to know the region. Thus, the contact of the enterprises with the tourists becomes closer, thus convincing them to enjoy the experience of tourism in rural areas thus knowing better the region and its peculiarities. Other ventures use radio as a means of dissemination where author Sant'Anna (2005) mentions that the media strategy in radios, tv, seeks to ensure transmission that will bring the best proportionality between investment and the efficiency with which consumers will be reached, thus bringing a higher return according to the purpose of the advertising campaign.

Word of mouth also known as word-of-mouth is a widely used tool in the researched enterprises, since for the interviewed tourists themselves mention to acquaintances about the place, indicating the visit. This tool justifies the studies by Jung, Yoo & Arnold (2017) where customer service experiences can be significantly influenced by the actions and behaviors of other customers. According to studies by Thakor, Suri, & Saleh (2008), the referral of other customers increases the expectation of enjoying the services, as word-of-mouth brings expectations.

V. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The objective of the study was to identify the dissemination practices implemented by tourism enterprises in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil. The tools for publicizing the tourism routes are an opportunity to increase the value of the products and services offered and make the enterprises known to potential tourists. Dissemination tools can make a significant contribution to tourism consolidation in areas where it has never been explored.

The results of the study can contribute by helping incipient ventures as well as motivating other ventures to adopt outreach tools. The wide variety of tourism routes makes dissemination the differential, attracting tourists to know the tourist enterprises. It is noticed that the use of dissemination strategies becomes an essential tool for the consolidation of tourism, as tourists are increasingly looking for tourist destinations through the internet and social networks.

In this way, ventures, when advertised on the Internet, may be an alternative for tourists from other regions who would never know of their existence. Thus it is possible to state that the different dissemination tools are important reaching specific audiences, collaborating with the successful success of tourism in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil.

Research indicates limitations and suggestions for future studies. As limitations, we can highlight the difficulty of access to data, since they were collected by 3 researchers during the period of 3 years from 2016 to 2018. As for future studies, the potential for investigation of which are the dissemination tools used by tourists from the state of Rio Grande do Sul to visit the projects and which times of the year would be most in demand.

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